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Nutrition Education That Works

Here's How...

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Here's How...



EFNEP program aides teach home-makers individually in their homes, or in small groups.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps low-income families—especially those with young children—achieve normal nutrition. Through the EFNEP program, these families learn the skills and changed behavior necessary to have adequate diets.

Principles of good food preparation and food safety are the subject of this program aide's lesson. Showing basic how-to-do's are an important part of her job.



The EFNEP program improves the dietary level of low-income families and youth through education and better use of resources. It's an educational program—not a give-away one.

This unique Extension Service program hires paraprofessionals ("program aides") to teach nutrition to low-income homemakers. These aides usually live in the communities where they work. They are trained and supervised by Extension home economists.

Program aides locate families by knocking on doors, through neighborhood contacts, or by referrals from other agencies. Aides teach women in their homes or in small groups—not in a classroom situation. Helping them deal with nutrition problems, the aides encourage the homemakers to use every resource by explaining and showing:

- why people need a balanced diet
- how to select and buy food that meets nutritional needs
- how to prepare and serve meals that taste good
- how to improve practices in food storage, safety, and sanitation
- how to manage food-related resources, such as gardens and food stamps.

More than 232,700 people have volunteered to assist with EFNEP. Paid professionals and paraprofessionals train these volunteers in extending nutrition education to youth.

How is the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program funded?

In 1969, Section 32 funds (U.S. Code reference is 7 U.S.C. 612C) provided \$10 million to Extension to initiate EFNEP. Congress appropriated, under the Smith-Lever budget, \$30 million in fiscal year 1970 and \$50 million in fiscal year 1971. The budget is currently \$50 million annually.

Ten percent of the total federal funds is divided equally among all states and the remainder is allocated according to the percent of poor families in each state. **Volunteer participation is a direct consequence and expansion of the funded program.**

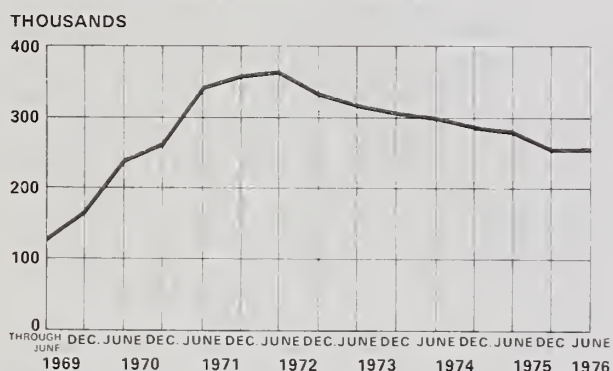
Is EFNEP working? It is evaluated regularly to find out. Every 6 months, a sample of EFNEP homemakers is asked for "dietary recalls"—that is, they are asked to tell what they ate during the past 24 hours. **This information documents that the program is helping low-income families improve their diets.**

What does EFNEP mean to key people in the community—who are also concerned about the well-being of low-income families?



EFNEP

Family Participation in EFNEP
at Six-Month Intervals



Inflation and the increasing cost of the EFNEP program have reduced the number of aides drastically. The program peaked in June 1972 with an enrollment of 361,000 families assisted by nearly 10,000 aides. Today, there are less than 5,000 aides employed—which means fewer families can now enroll in this vital nutrition education program. Since it began in 1969, more than 1,390,000 families have improved their diets through EFNEP. This represents approximately 6 million family members.

The Extension home economist (center) selects, trains, and supervises the program aides. Before a program aide begins her work, she receives at least 3 weeks of intensive training. Additional on-the-job training is regularly provided.

The Honorable Wade B. Matheny, North Carolina District Court Judge, General Court of Justice, said:

"... For the past several years, I have been familiar with the operation of this important program here in North Carolina. I know of no program more necessary and important than this one at a time of serious unemployment... rampant inflation... high cost of food... The national defense and security of this country depends upon the strong health and security of our people. Too many of our people both young and old do not get a balanced and nutritious diet..."

St. Paul, Minnesota welfare nutritionists, Irene Alton and Patricia Swanson said:

"As nutritionists for a maternal and infant care project, we feel the EFNEP program is an asset to this community. Their services are greatly needed by our young mothers to learn family nutrition, food budgeting, meal planning, and cooking skills. Our patients have been receptive to this program and have benefited from the services evidenced by improved nutritional status and food management skills."

Laska Rice, a program aide in Randolph County, Alabama, reports that **her doctor, Willis D. Israel** said:

"... Since the program has been operating in this county, I've noticed a change in the health of my patients who were visited by Mrs. Rice and Mrs. Edwards (another program aide). These patients are in better health, do not have to take as much medication, are more active. I can tell the difference in my patients who are enrolled in EFNEP."

In Massachusetts, **Cambridge Mayor Walter J. Sullivan** states in a recent proclamation:

"... Program aides teaching in this people-to-people program have worked intensively with low-income families on an individual or small group basis. These low-income families have become aware of their families' needs for milk, fruits and vegetables; and of how to make better use of USDA food stamps..."

For more information, contact the Extension director at your state land-grant university.





Before a program aide is accepted by the homemaker, she must win the woman's confidence. She is not selling anything. She is not giving anything away. Her "product" is information that can help the homemaker improve the nutritional quality of her family's diet.

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This teenager has learned through the EFNEP youth program how to get the most nutrition for her family's food money.



